

First-ever Pakistan Film Festival opens at UN

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

By: Samaa Web Desk

UNITED NATIONS: The first-ever Pakistan Film Festival kicked off Friday night with a largely-attended red carpet reception at UN Headquarters in New York in the presence of some of the biggest Pakistani stars, ambassadors accredited to the UN, community members, media and movie buffs.

UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, who was the chief guest, congratulated the Pakistan Mission to the UN for organizing the two-day festival that will showcase at Asia Society top-rated Pakistani movies over the weekend, saying that cultural events such as this one played a key role in promoting better understanding among peoples of the world.

Pakistanâ??s Ambassador to the United Nations Maleeha Lodhi, who took the initiative to hold the festival, read out a welcome address, saying the films from Pakistan will convey the energy and dynamism that defines todayâ??s Pakistan.

In his brief remarks, Eliasson, the UN deputy secretary-general, also said that art, film and music build bridges across cultures and promote peace through inter-cultural understanding.

He welcomed Pakistani film stars to the United Nations, saying, â??You have given life to this buildingâ?¦â?•



UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson providing opening remarks at UN Headquarters/New York for first-ever Pakistan Film Festival on December 3, 2016. (Photo credit: http://www.samaa.tv)

â??You have already conquered Pakistan, now you will conquer New York,â?• he said, as applause rang out.

Pakistani actors, who travelled to New York from Pakistan, included Mahira Khan, Mawra Hocane, Nabeel Qureshi, Saba Qamar, Wajahat Rauf, Yasir Hussain, Sheheryar Munawar, Asim Raza, Tooba Siddiqui, Adeel Hussain, Sanam Saeed, Jerjees Seja (JJ), Producer, Afia Serena Nathaniel and Mehreen Jabbar.

But Sabiha Khanum, the popular heroine of the 50s and 60s, received the biggest applause when Ambassador Lodhi introduced her.

The films to be screened include two brand new ones, which will premiere in New York, Dobara Pher Say and Lahore Say Agay. Others will include Actor in law, Pakistanâ??s Oscar nomination, Mahe Meer, Oscar award winner Sharmeen Obaidâ??s animated film, 3 Bahadur, Dukhtar, Dance Kahani and Ho Mann Jahan.



Pakistani Ambassador to the United Nations, Maleeha Lodhi addresses the Opening Day audience at the first-ever Pakistan Film Festival at the UN Headquarters in New York City December 3, 2016. (Photo via @MaleehaLodhi twitter)

Pakistanâ??s Ambassador to the United Nations Maleeha Lodhi

Ambassador Lodhi told the gathering that the festival has been organized to both acknowledge the remarkable revival of Pakistanâ??s cinema and to showcase and celebrate it.

â??This revival has been spearheaded by a new wave of young filmmakers and actors; they have produced a devise array of movies that have been pushing the boundaries and charting and breaking new ground by tackling bold themes and using digital technology,â?• she said.

â??It is appropriate that we are launching the Festival here at the United Nations which embodies and represents the finest example of our shared humanity,â?• the Pakistani envoy said.

â??Art, it is rightly said, transcends borders and connects people from different backgrounds and nations and unites all civilizations and cultures in a collective celebration of our emotional lives.â?•



(Photo via @MaleehaLodhi)

Since assuming charge as Pakistanâ??s Permanent Representative to UN, Ambassador Lodhi has undertaken several cultural projects and organized a series of events to promote Pakistanâ??s soft image and highlight its modern and vibrant culture but also its ancient civilizational roots.

The Pakistan Mission, under her leadership, organized a â??Sufi Nightâ?• at the UN General Assembly hall to mark Pakistan Day earlier this year featuring Rahat Fateh Ali Khan.

She also organized an Exhibition of Contemporary Art from Pakistan at the UN, which showcased some of the best works of art to demonstrate how Pakistan is becoming a powerhouse of creativity. She was also instrumental in bringing the Lahore Literary Festival to the Asia Society in New York.

*Featured photo: UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson providing opening remarks at UN Headquarters/New York for first-ever Pakistan Film Festival (Photo credit: http://www.samaa.tv)

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hollywoodglee